A True Relation

OF THE

Inhumane and Unparallel'd Actions,

AND

Barbarous Murders

OF

NEGROES or *MOORS*:

Committed on three English-men in Old *Calabar* in *Guinny*. Of the Wonderful Deliverance of the Fourth Person, after he had endured Horrid Cruelties and Sufferings: who lately arrived in *England*, and is now in his Majesties Fleet.

Together with a short, but true Account of the Customs and Manners and Growth of the Country, which is very Pleasant.

LONDON,
Printed for *Thomas Passinger* at the three Bibles on *London-Bridge*, and *Benjamin Harlock* over against S. *Magnus* Church. 1672.

A True Relation of the inhumane and unparalleld Actions, and barbarous Murders of Negroes *or* Moors, *committed on three English men in Old* Calabar *in* Guinny, &c.

AMong the variety of Cruelties and Murders, which History and Experience daily inform us of, this, which I now intend to relate, is none of the least. And the story you shall have *verbatim*, from one of the sufferers own mouth; who arrived lately in the *Downs*, and is now in His Majesties Fleet.

In *June* 1668. the *Peach-tree* of *London*, a small Vessel of the Burthen of about sixty Tuns, *Edward Dixon* Master, came into the *Downs* bound for *Guinny*, intending there to take in *Negroes*, and to transport them to the *Barbadoes*, and from thence to come for *London*, where *John Watts* the son of *John Watts*, of *Elham*, in the County of *Kent*, Chirurgion, shipt himself with the consent of *Richard Watts*, publick Notary of *Deal*; little dreading that he, being not above eighteen years old, should meet with such a calamitous accident: The Ship had not been long in the *Downs*, but a fair gale presenting, they suddenly hoisted Sail, Gods providence seeming to fill their Sails with prosperous success; the first place they touched at was the Gold Coast, where they staid not long, but sailed to old *Calabar* in the Bith of *Guinny*. They entered a river called the *Cross* river into *Parats* Island. After they had taken in their *Negroes*, and ready to sail, their Anchor being a peek, the

Maſter calls up the Boatſwain and three men more, whereof the relator was one, and commands them to look out the Copper barrs that were left, and carry them on ſhore to try if they could ſell them: the Boatſwain with his ſmall company deſired that they might have Arms with them, not believing the report of ſome, that informed them they were a harmleſs, and innocent people: they took with them 3 Muſquets and a Piſtol, & ſo rowed towards the ſhore, but not far from it unhappily our match fell into the water, & the ſhip being faln down from that narrow part of the river, nearer the Sea, quite out of our ſight, we were conſulting what would be ſafeſt for us to do: we were not willing to precipitate our own ruine, and we were alſo aſhamed to return to our ſhip before we had diſpatched what we were commanded to: at length the Boatſwain commanded the Relator *John Watts* on ſhore, to the firſt houſe to light our match, which we recovered out of the water, after it was extinct; which he readily obeyed: but before he was twenty Rods from the water ſide, he was ſeized on by two blacks (or rather Tawny mores) and by them haled above half a mile up into the Country, and thrown with great violence upon his belly, and ſo compelled to lye till they ſtript him; and more company coming to them, they were ſo eager for his poor Canvas apparel, that ſome they tore off, others they cut off, and with that ſeveral pieces of his fleſh, to his intolerable pain: with theſe rags they made little children Aprons to cover their Privities: Linnen and Woollen being very ſcarce there. The Boatſwain ſeeing this *John Watts* was thus carried away, was reſolved with his other two companions to have him again, or elſe to venture all their lives for him: They arm themſelves; but whileſt they were conſulting what to do, whether to venture on ſhore, or not, of a ſudden they were beſet with about a dozen men in ſeveral Canoes, but they valiantly maintained their boat about the ſpace of three hours, for after two of their three Muſquets were diſcharged, they defended themſelves with their Oars, and Boat hooks. The Boatſwain received a mortal wound in his Groin, and fell down in the Boat; the other two adventured

red in the River, endeavouring by ſwimming to eſcape the mercileſs hands of cruel infidels; but the Negroes with their ſwift Canoes ſoon overtook them, and brought them on ſhore to the place where the relater was. The Negroes took out the Boatſwain out of the ſhips boat; and inſtead of endeavouring at all to preſerve life which remained in him, immediately they rob'd him of it; one of them with a keen weapon cutting off his head before his companions faces; and then they prepare for their rare banquet, while he was yet reeking in his blood: they in a barbarous manner cut off pieces of fleſh from off his buttocks and his thighs and his arms and ſhoulders, and broiled them on the coals, and with a great deal of impatience eagerly eat it before their faces to our great aſtoniſhment. About fourteen days after one of the company fell ſick, and inſtead of being Phyſicians to cure him, they were his Butchers to murther him. They ſerved him as they did the Boatſwain, cut off his head, and broiled and eat up his fleſh and rejoyced exceedingly at this rich banquet. About ten days after the third fell ſick, whom they ſerved in the ſame manner. This was no ſmall cauſe of ſorrow to the relater: the thoughts of their inhumane and barbarous actions ſometimes ſurrounded him with fears and ſorrows, hourly expecting to taſte of the ſaid cruelty. Death did not ſeem ſo terrible to him as the violent manner of it; being left now alone in a ſtrange Country, deſtitute of friends or acquaintance, or any thing that might keep up his Spirits: die he would fain, but not by the hand of Infidels and barbarous Monſters. But the great God that is moſt compaſſionate in the greateſt extremities had pity on him, and notwithſtanding the alteration of the Climate and the want of Cloaths, and the ſtrangeneſs of his food which was only herbs, he continued in good health, and had time enough to lament this direful providence. The Natives who were daily expecting another banquet, met with a diſappointment: either their cuſtoms or the over-ruling power of God would not ſuffer them to deſtroy him; he continuing ſtill in health. Therefore they reſolve to ſell him: his *Arauna* or Maſter was pretty free to diſ-

course him, which the relater was capable of, being about three years before in the *West-Indies*, where he had learned the *Tons* language, which is easily attained being comprehended in a very few words, and all the *Negroes* speak of it. He began to discourse his master to know the reason of their cruelty, who told him that he should rest himself contented, who if he were not sick, should not have his head cut off. In the Boat which in the beginning they took with them, was a Musquet saved of the three which was not discharged, which his master some time after he had been with him, brought to him to know the use of it: he endeavoured as much as he could to make him apprehend the use of it, but still they profest their ignorance: but they commanded and threatned him to shew the use of it. The fear of his masters displeasure and their inhumanity caused him to shoot it off; but the Negroes which expected some delightful thing were frustrated, and at the suddain noise and flash of fire (which they very much dread) ran from him, and were greatly affrighted; but quickly after hearing no more of that noise they came up to him again, and commanded him to do the like: he told them he had not powder which was the cause of the noise; but this would not satisfie these Barbarians. He not being able to answer their expectation, they concluded he was not willing, they proceed to threaten him, and were about to murder him, had not his master rescued him. Upon discourse after with this *Arauna* or Master he began to understand the reason of their barbarous dealing with him and his friends, he telling him that naturally the people were civil and simply honest, but if provoked, full of revenge; and that this cruelty was occasioned by some unhandsome action of carrying a Native away without their leave about a year before; they resolving if any came ashore they should never go off alive. He had not been above seven weeks in the Country, but his master presented him to his King, whose name was *E-fu-me* King of the *Buckaneers*, who immediately gave him to his daughter, whose name was *Om-jah*, and when the King went abroad he attended him also as his

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Page, throughout the whole Circuit of his Dominions, which was not above twelve miles, yet boasting extreamly of his power and strength, but glorying exceedingly that he had a white to attend him, whom he employed to carry his bow and arrows at several places remote from the Sea side; the people would run away from him for fear, others would fall down and seem to worship him, and use those actions as they do to their God. Their progress was never so long but they could return home at night, but never without a handsome load of a cup of the creature. During all the time of the relaters servitude there, he never knew him go abroad and come home sober. They drink of the best Palm Wine, and another sort of strong liquor, called *Penroro*. The relater quickly knew how to humour this profound Prince, and if any of the Natives abused him, upon his complaint he had redress, as once by striving with a Negroe his Arm was broke, which by providence more than skill was set again. After some months, the King of *Ca-la-nanch* whose name was *E-fu-man-cha*, hearing of this beautiful white, courted his neighbour Prince, that he would sell him to him; at length they struck a bargain, and the relater was sold for a Cow and a Goat; this King was a very sober and moderate person, free from treacheries and mischiefs, that the other was subject unto; and he would often discourse the Relater, and ask him of his King and Country, and if his Kingdomes and Dominions were as big as his, which were not above twenty five miles in length and fifteen in breadth. He told him as much as his understanding and years made him capable of, keeping still in the bounds of modesty, and yet relating as much as possible to the honour and dignity of his Sovereign; first informing him of the greatness of one of his Kingdomes, the several Shires and Counties it contained, with number of its Cities and Towns and Castles, and the strength of each, the infinite inhabitants, and valour of his Subjects. One of these Kingdomes was enough to amaze sufficiently this petty Governour, that he need not to mention any more of his Majesties Glory and Dignity. It put him into

such

such a profound consternation, that he resolved to find out some way to tender his respects to this mighty Prince, and no way could he find so convenient, as to tell the Relater, that if he could find but a passage, he would let him go to *England*, to tell his Majesty of the great favour and respect he had for him. This did not a little rejoyce our English man. Withal the King told him, that he would send him a Present, which should be two Cabarcets or Goats, which they do value at a very high rate; the King having not above 16 or 18. He tells the King, that the King of *England* had many thousands of his subjects, that were under the degree of Gentlemen, which had a thousand of Sheep apiece; the flesh of which, they valued at a very much higher rate than Goats. Though our English man lived very handsomely with this *E-fu-man-cha* King of the *Ca-la-nanch*, yet his desires and his hopes were still for his Native Countrey: at length he obtained a promise from his King, that the first English ship that came into the Road, should have liberty to release or purchase him; this very much rejoiced his heart: now he thought every day a year, till he could hear of, or see some English Ship arrived. Many times when he was alone, his heart would be oppress with sighs and sobbings, when he thought of his Relations, and the comfortable society that they had together; that it should be his unhappy fate to be captivated amongst barbarous Infidels. Oftentimes did he walk down to the Sea-side, sometimes with hopes, sometimes with fear, earnestly expecting the wind of Gods Providence to blow in some English Ship thither: his often recourse to the Sea-side was discerned by one *Ja-ga* a Wizard, & the chiefest in three or four Kingdoms thereabouts; they are persons that the Natives give very much credit to, and on any difficult occasion run to them for satisfaction. That famous Delphean Oracle was never had in greater adoration, than the prophetical speeches of these Morish Wizards. Though they have infinite numbers of them in every place, yet this *Ja-ga* had the most renown amongst them; and one day he comes to him, and very kindly ask'd him, why he so very often frequented that place; he

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told him, to see if he could discover any English Vessel to come in there; but he being not unacquainted with his great fame, askt him when he did believe there would one come in; not that he was willing to give credit to any of their divinations, but supposing that he thereby should please him and answer his expectation. *Ja-ga* immediately told him that the fifteenth day after an English Ship should come into the Road. Then he askt him whether that ship should carry him away. To this he answered doubtfully, but told him that he should be offered to the Master of the Ship, and if they could not agree, but that he should come to shoar again, he should not be sold, and that in a very short time after he should dye for grief. These fifteen days seem'd very long and tedious; many a look did he cast on the Sea with an aking heart: the fourteenth day he went to the highest hill there-about, but to no purpose, for he could discover no ship: next morning he went again two or three times, but saw none: about two or three hours after came running into *E-fu-man-cha*, some of the Mores, and told him there was a Canoe coming, so they called our ships, at which our English man heartily rejoyced, hoping then to be releast forthwith, yet durst not shew his Joy for fear of punishment or of death; for though he lived better now than with his first Master, yet his service was far worse than the slaves in *Turkey*, and their diet worse than Dogs meat; therefore had he cause enough of inward joy; the ship came immediately in, and he hies away presently to *Ja-ga*, to know if it were an English ship, who resolved him that it was; it happened to be the St. *Malos* Merchant, Captain *Royden* Commander, who hastened to dispatch his business, took in his Negroes, and was ready to sail, and our English man heard never a word what should become of him, the King never offering to sell him; this put him on a resolution to endeavour to make an escape, and to that end had prepared a piece of Timber which he had drawn near the water side, on which he intended to paddle to the ship, which then lay about a league from the shore. Just by the Sea side, as he was about to launch his little

floating sticks, he espied a great Aligator, which will devour a man at a mouthful: this made him alter his resolution, and resolve rather to live with inhumane infidels, than to throw himself into so imminent a danger, which would have been little less than self-murther. But the next day, which I may call a day of *Jubile*, Almighty God opened the heart of the King to let the poor English man go: he sent him in a Canoe, plac'd between a Negroes legs, with some others to guide this small vessel, for fear he should leap over-board, and swim to the ship. At a distance from the ship he hailed her in the English Tongue, which was no small cause of admiration to those on board to hear an English Tongue out of their Canoes: the Negroes gave him leave to stand up and shew himself to the Captain, to whom he gave an account how four were left there, and only he preserved. It was a pretty while before they could strike a bargain, though the Captain was resolved not to leave him behind. Several times the Negroes padled away with their Canoe, resolving not to part with him; but what with his entreaties and promises he perswaded them to the ship again, and they delivered him on board for forty five Copper Bars and Iron Bars, each Copper Bar being about the bigness of a Youths little finger, the Iron Bars a little bigger. Now were his joys compleated, he thought himself, as it were caught up into the third heavens; he could hardly perswade himself but it was a Dream or Vision, and that he did not really see English faces or embrace English bodies. It was some time before he could throw himself at the Captains feet, and acknowledge his infinite cause of joy in himself, and thankfulness to him for his deliverance from such a severe Captivity; that he that lately was a slave to Infidels, that worship they know not what, should now see the faces of Christians, and joyn with them in worshiping the true God; and to him first he offered up the sacrifice of hearty thanksgiving, that had sent his Angel to redeem him from so cruel a bondage. When he came on board, his hair was very long, and hisskin tawny (*Mulatto* like) having gone naked all the time he was there, and frequently

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quently anointing himself with palm Oyl, he looked like a Tawny-More; but immediately the Sea-men aboard with Christian-like hearts apparelled him. The Master commanded to hoise sail, and having a fair wind, they sailed to *Barbadoes*, where Captain *Royden* was to stay some time; but the Relator earnestly desiring to go to his Native Country, and his relations, got passage to the *Downs*, in the *Catharine* of *London*, Captain *South* Commander, which through Gods goodness in a few weeks arrived in the *Downs*, where the Relater was put on shore, to his Unkle, Mr. *Richard Watts* of *Dover*, his great joy and satisfaction, who took this relation from his own mouth.

HAving shewed you how he was captivated, and some part of his tryals and troubles, and also his Deliverance and freedom; we will now speak of the People, and of their Country, as it was taken from his own mouth, whis is no more than others have spoken formerly, who have been in the same Countrey.

The People.

THe People are very careless, idle, sluggish, given wholly to ease; going stark naked (only some of the chiefest having a little aporn to cover their nakedness) not exercising themselves either in work or play; free from having any tillage whatsoever, (a small part only for Tobbacco, for their own use, excepted) having no thought for to morrow. Their stature and bigness not near so big as our English.

Language.

THeir Language is called the *Tota* Language: it is contained in very few wrods, only so much as barely discovers their intentions: and is in part understood of all *Negroes*.

The Countrey.

THe Countrey seems to be very fertile, overgrown with wood: Sugar Canes naturally grow there. He has been in most parts of the *West-Indies*, yet he says, he never saw bigger nor more juicy than is there: the people lye secure as they think, but indeed lie very open, & are a prey to a handful of men. There are many Bears (which are very good meat) which they often eat of, when they take pains to catch them. They have also

alſo Hogs, Beeſs, Deer and Buffelows, divers ſorts of good eating Fowls, as Cocks and Hens, Parots, Parakeets, &c. Roots and ſeveral ſorts of herbs, alſo Palm-wine, which they have by cutting a top of a tree, then iſſues forth the wine as ſap of wood, when 'tis burning. There is alſo very good Fiſh; there is plenty of many things, they only want laborious perſons to catch proviſion (for all are wild) and to cut down the Woods: *John Watts* being much in the *Weſt-Indies*, and underſtanding the way to make Sugar, invited them to learn, having ſuch excellent juicy Canes. But idleneſs would not hearken to ſo reaſonable a requeſt.

Their Proviſions.

THeir Proviſions is Ebung, a root like a Turnip, and as good and hearty as a Pottato, Yams, Plantons, Palm oyl, Water and Palm wine for drink: their fleſh is Elephants, wild Boars, Sows and Pigs, Deer, Munkeys, Baboons, Dogs, &c. their Fiſh is Sea-cows and Bulls, Alegators, Albecores, the Cat-fiſh, &c.

Their Weapons.

BOws, Arrows, and Swords, they make of a piece of Iron they ſteal from the Engliſh, and beat out with ſtones, which they neatly engrave: alſo they have a lance, which is alſo tipt at end with a piece of Iron, and cut and engraved with flints, as they do their Swords; very few of them have either lance or ſword, many of them have ſwords of Iron-Wood, ſo called there. Their Bow is about four foot long; their Arrows about two foot and a quarter: their lance is about five foot long. Theſe are the Weapons they fight with, and with them they do much miſchief.

Of their Houſes.

THeir Houſes are bigger or leſſer, according to the Family and number of wives every man enjoys (for every one hath

hath liberty to have as many wives as he pleases; the ordinary men have two, three, or four; but the rich men and the King have many wives) set on scratches or posts covered with the leaves of a *Mimbo* (*alias* a Palm-wine) tree: the going in is very low (not above three foot high) and within, it is not six foot high: in this room is their fire kept day and night, their lodgings joining to this room: every wife hath her several house or lodging for her self and children, but all make use of this common fire, which is only for dressing of victuals; they have no occasion for a fire of any other use.

Of their Habit.

THe King and some great men have clouts as big as a sheet of large paper to cover their nakedness: so likewise the Kings wives and great mens wives have a pitch or clout; but for the common people, they go stark naked, and are no more ashamed than brute beasts.

Of their God.

THey have no particular place of Worship, neither do they congregate themselves, nor are there Ministers, or in the least a talk of their God (but of fear of being beat by him) but like beasts rise out of their little lodgings; eat, drink, and take their pleasures, and at night sleep again. He hath oftentimes heard them say, their God (which is the Devil) oftentimes appears to them in the likeness of a man, about two foot and a half high, as black as they are, whom they call *Ajab*, (which is very strange that the Devil should give himself such a name, which is compounded of *A* and *Jab*, which is one of the names of God, as in *Exodus*: *Jah* is my name, so *Ajab* being joined together, is as much as if the Devil should call himself without God, or against God. But for that the learned will tell you at ease, that with much study cannot be resolved by my pen.) When any of them are sick, they go to the picture of their *Ajab*, and speak to it, then suddenly after he appears, as at

other

other times: for when he appears in a humane shape, he hath many Copper bars about his loins, legs, neck, and arms, as the chiefe of them go with; then all presently worship him: then presently they kill Dogs, Goats, or Chickens (but most commonly Dogs) according as he commands, cutting off their heads, throwing the blood on the sick person, burning the bodies, and burying the heads and legs for a sacrifice to *Ajab*. If he recover, he takes three or four Chickens and other things, and hangs them up alive by the legs over where he was sick, until they are dead; and when they are dead, he hangs them without his house at the top of a high pole, who that night are eaten up by the Buzzards, and other wild fowl. If the sick man recover not, and if he be rich, they take several of his slaves before his face and be-head them, and throw their blood on their Master. These poor creatures think it a great honour that they may lose their lives for the recovery of their Masters health.

If they dye.

If ordinary people be sick and like to dye, they cut off their heads, and keep them above ground five days. But if a rich man be sick, they cut not off his head, but let him die naturally. And when five days are expired, they bury him with his Copper bars about his neck, waste, arms, and legs, as they usually go, burying with him every sort of that household-stuff they have, as a stool, an earthen Pot, a Calabash, a Goard, *&c.* and with him some of his servants heads, sometimes three or four, sometimes ten or twelve; and this is a credit for the Master, and an honour to the servant. Into the grave is killed and thrown in several Goats, Chickens, and other provisions, according to the number of the persons therein; for their *Ajab* perswades them they go into a far Countrey, where there is all necessaries and all riches, and that this provision is to eat by the way for the Gentleman and his men that are buried. But when once they come there, they shall have all whatever they desire.

Of

Of their King.

He knows not whether the King be Hereditary or elective, this he observed in both Kingdomes, that every morning the young Maidens of the Town where the King lives, wait for the Kings rising at his house or Palace, which is larger and handsomer than any of theirs, because he hath more wives; when he comes out they keep continual bowing with their heads and bodies to him for the space of eight or ten minutes, saying, *Aa, eera*, and clap their hands; which words, *Aa* is how do you, and *eera* is thanks for his health; he all the time saying *Aa*, or how do you. The whole people are as serviceable to their King, as we are to our Soveraign.

Slaves.

THe Slaves they sell to the English are prisoners taken in war: the Kings war much against one another. They have no Holds, Castles, nor Prisons; but for keeping those they have taken, until the next Ship comes in, with withs they fasten them to a pole, that they cannot untye themselves, and get home. They are also perswaded that they go to help that King to fight against his enemy, and that they shall live idlely, and eat good victuals, drink good liquor, and have cloaths, and that the King will give them great rewards. But if half were performed that is promised, they would be more ready to go, than we to fetch them.

How Ajah uses them.

He oftentimes heard them cry out in the night, making a very great screeching noise, and lamentable cry, three or four hours together; and that is when they do not please *Ajah*, or he takes an occasion against them, for he keeps them as slaves. Next day they bemoan themselves to themselves, for if they complain one to another, then he beats and pinches them worse than

shape before. They told him oftentimes that *Ajab* appears to them in several shapes, and very oftentimes fears them, he comes so ugly; but most times he comes in their own shape, with Copper Bars, as aforesaid.

Their Birth.

There is no more compassion, nor care taken on them, or for them that are big with child, than there is in *England* for their Sows, Cows, Sheep, &c. (no nor so much) and when delivered, they take as little care of their Children; for assoon as they are born, their mother fetches water, and with her hand puts it in their nostrils till they are almost strangled, then they take them up by the heels, their head downwards, for the water to run away; then they lay them on the ground, where after they have cryed their fill, they fall asleep: this is all they have the first four and twenty hours. If they be poor women, they tye their children at their backs, and go to work.

Their Marriages.

If a man and a maid agree, and resolve to be betrothed (for 'tis certainly reported, widows there never marry) they go before several persons, one whereof is the King, or a great man, and cut each others wrist with a flint stone, and suck each others blood, and this is their marriage, and that knot there with them that cannot be broken.

Of a Whore.

If a woman be taken in whoredom, they carry her to an Ants nest, (which there is bigger than a bushel, and hang in trees in a bunch like bees:) under the Ants they tye her fast with withes, then with a pole shake down the nest on her; where they keep her about half an hour, in which time she is almost stung to death: then they carry her to a fire, and heat

her back, and also cut at least ten gashes in it, that she may be known: then for the next fault her husband sells her.

A Scould.

If a wife scould with any of her neighbours, or with her husbands other wives, and she be abusive, especially if she strikes, and he see it or have good evidence, he takes the scould, and cuts a croft in her shoulder about four inches long, and if she commit the like fault, he sells her. Thus they take occasion to sell their wives, children and servants.

A Thief.

Though they generally are Thieves themselves when they come into our ships, yet they are severer against thieves in their own Country by blows, and for the second fault sell them.

Wounds.

If any be wounded, they knock the wound, and cut round about it, and that is all the remedy.

Rain.

The Rains come every full Moon, which they call a year, (for the Moon is their Governour for almost every thing) but once in three or four Moons it happens that so much water comes from the hills that it comes close to their towns, and oftentimes does mischief.

A Canoe.

A Canoe is their Boat, which is the body of a tree, which they cut hollow, somewhat like unto one of our Hog-troughs.

Dressing

Dreſſing of victuals.

They are very ſubject to their own humour, and will not be taught; he would have ſhewed them how to dreſs their victuals, but they would not learn, ſaying, as for fleſh, if it were little more than hot through, it were enough: ſo alſo they eat their herbs and fiſh: as for ſalt, he never ſaw any there.

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